

Staffing Analysis and Workforce Plan

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2019

July 7, 2014

TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
www.tsd.state.tx.us



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Overview

Vision

Texas School for the Deaf is the innovative leader providing exemplary and comprehensive ASL/English bilingual education empowering students to be engaged, life-long learners. We are a welcoming, dynamic, and diverse community collaborating with the global community.

Mission

The mission of the Texas School for the Deaf is to ensure that students excel in an environment where they learn, grow, and belong. We support deaf students, families, and professionals in Texas by providing resources through outreach services.

Beliefs

- Education is a responsibility shared by the students, family, school and community
- All students thrive and excel in a community that values diverse abilities, needs, and interests
- Treating people with dignity and respect is essential to a healthy and productive environment
- The development of the whole person socially, physically, intellectually, culturally, and emotionally is imperative to life-long success
- Involving people in decisions that impact their lives promotes ownership, commitment, action, and a sense of value and pride
- A strong language foundation is essential to students' success
- Deliberate and collaborative American Sign Language (ASL) and English language planning fosters language acquisition and learning
- Immersing students in Deaf Culture promotes a sense of belonging and acceptance, which in turn enhances positive identity and self-worth
- An interdisciplinary curriculum that focuses on creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration is essential to prepare students for life in the 21st Century
- Students have the right to an education by motivated and engaged faculty and staff who apply current best practices
- Proficiency in 21st Century technology skills and tools is a requisite for success in a global community
- Students who are deaf or hard of hearing, including those with additional disabilities, along with their families, communities, and stakeholders throughout Texas can benefit from resources and support provided by Texas School for the Deaf

Functions

TSD provides a continuum of direct educational services to students, birth through twenty-two, who are deaf or hard of hearing; some of these students may have multiple disabilities. TSD also directed to serve as a statewide educational resource. Through the Educational Resource Center on Deafness (ERCOD), TSD provides a variety of educational services to programs and professionals throughout the state working with and for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. (Texas Education Code, §30.051.)

Anticipated Changes to the Mission, Strategies, and Goals Over the Next Five Years

TSD's two primary functions—serving students on the Austin campus and providing statewide outreach services—are expected to continue without change over the next five years.

- TSD will continue to provide educational, residential support and related services to TSD's on-site population of deaf and hard of hearing students. TSD is experiencing, however, and expects to continue experiencing, a change in the nature of the population of students TSD serves. If current trends continue,

we will serve an increasing number of students with complex additional disabilities including medically fragile children. TSD will likely also serve students who have a history of abuse, neglect and serious behavior issues. At the same time, TSD's population of "traditional" deaf children will grow as a result of the quality of the school's reputation nationwide, the attraction of TSD as an employer for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing, and the general strength of the Austin area economy.

- The same is true for TSD's outreach and resource mission. Although the mission will remain the same, the need for services will expand. As a "center" school for students who are deaf and hard of hearing, TSD has the centralized resources and expertise to share with school districts, families, and professionals involved in the education of deaf and hard of hearing students. As TSD builds staff in the Educational Resource Center on Deafness, TSD's outreach activities will increase. TSD has also begun to work more collaboratively with Texas Education Agency statewide deaf services as well as statewide partners in the Education Service Centers charged with providing technical assistance in specified areas to professionals in deaf education. Recently TSD has assumed a statewide leadership role in services to families. TSD expects to see growth in that role over the next five years including the establishment of a Family Resource Center on the campus in Austin.

Additional Considerations

Key Economic and Environmental Factors.

Energy Costs. The cost to provide electricity, natural gas and water has increased significantly in the last ten years. Additionally, increases in crude oil prices have resulted in higher consumer prices for gasoline, diesel fuel, commercial transportation fares and consumer products. These increases have had a significant impact on the school's budget.

The Employees Retirement System (ERS) Reduced Health Benefits and Increased Employee Contributions. The once strong benefits package offered to state employees is losing ground each year. Higher costs for children and spouse health insurance coverage, co-pays for medical and drug services make the benefits package less of a selling point for recruitment and retention purposes.

New Requirements for an Already Scarce Talent Pool. Highly qualified deaf educators are in short supply and high demand and that shortage is expected to worsen over the next years. Teachers of children who are deaf or hard of hearing require specialized training to obtain the skills to meet the complex needs of the students, including competency in American Sign Language. The teacher training programs are not preparing sufficient numbers of teachers to meet either replacement or growth needs. Over the past decade, 21 university deaf education teacher-training programs were discontinued while only 12 new programs were initiated. There are only four university-based deaf education programs in the State of Texas. The status of teacher retention is equally dim. Currently, 20% of teachers leave their jobs in less than five years. Ironically, at the same time TSD faces this serious teacher shortage, the No Child Left Behind act has imposed additional requirements for all teachers, including those who teach deaf students, in core academic areas.

Uncompetitive Salaries. Texas state salaries are simply not competitive with the rest of the nation. The reduction in employee benefits and increased costs have adversely impacted employees. As a result, we are unable to compete with the private sector and other states for qualified staff resulting in shortages in critical positions such as Educational Diagnosticians, Counselors, Nurses, Interpreters, Residential Educators, Teachers, and Teacher Aides.

Housing Costs. Over the past decade, the population migration to Texas, especially Central Texas, has resulted in a dramatic increase in the cost of housing, making it more difficult to recruit from outside the area. The average cost of homes has increased dramatically. As a result, qualified applicants have declined job offers when they realized the high cost of living in Central Texas. Others have relocated to Texas only to learn that the income they earn is not sufficient to allow them to continue living in Central Texas.

Transportation Costs. The high cost of fuel has added to the financial burden of the lower income staff such as residential educators, cafeteria, transportation and maintenance staff. Many find they are unable to live on only one income and must work more than one job to support themselves and their families. Many TSD employees live outside the Austin city limits and the cost of travel to TSD has become increasingly burdensome.

Current Economic Conditions. The uncertain economy, cost of housing, energy costs and other economic factors have combined to affect TSD's ability to provide the quantity and quality of services needed on the TSD campus and across the state. The unique nature of TSD's staffing needs creates difficulty in maintaining a full staff. Staffing shortages deprive students of the amount of individualized instruction they need and create circumstances where supervision may be inadequate. Lack of staff makes it difficult to maintain the facilities thus possibly jeopardizing student health and safety. We have not been able to increase services to deaf students and their families across the state.

TSD Response to Economic Conditions. To cope with the affect of past adverse economic conditions and limited resources, TSD has sought alternative methods of providing services. Distance learning classrooms have been established and the use of video conferencing is increasing. Resources are being shifted to provide services in communities across the state.

Current Customer Demands. TSD's customers include students, parents, and professionals throughout the state. TSD's student population requires a level of services that the current number of professional and paraprofessional employees are unable to provide. Adding to this problem, the student population is also becoming increasingly multi-impaired and has complex needs for more intensive services related to the multiple impairments.

Parents of TSD Students as Well as Parents of Deaf Children Throughout the State Require Intensive Training in Sign Language and Parenting Skills Necessary for Effective Parenting of Deaf Children.

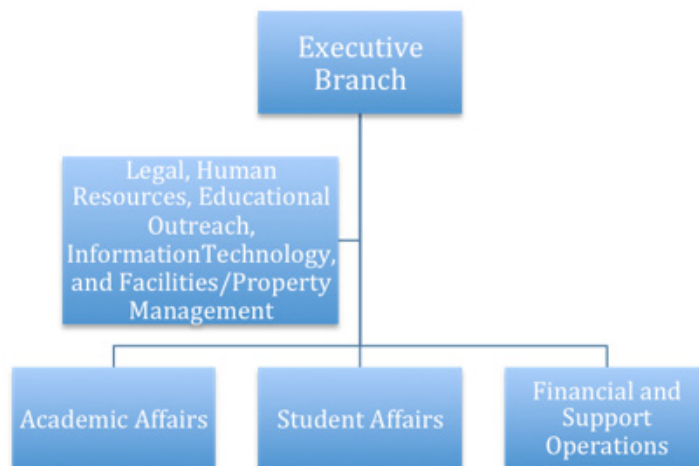
They require information about all services to which their child is legally entitled or otherwise needs including educational services (e.g.—the Individual Educational Plan and Admission, Review and Dismissal Process) and health services. Additionally, as the population of TSD students living in Austin increases, their parents require increased levels of daily transportation.

Long Range Business Plans. TSD's long-range business plan must include a variety of restructuring efforts to maintain a quality continuum of educational services for TSD students. We need to continue to represent innovative strategies and proven methods for learning for deaf and hard of hearing students. We need a comprehensive design for effective school functioning that aligns the school's curriculum, technology and professional development into a coordinated plan to improve achievement. We must maintain a continuous professional staff development and training program to meet the current workforce demands. We need new areas of business and community support to implement school activities and programs. TSD needs new sources of federal, state and local funding to sustain school reform efforts. Lastly, and most importantly, TSD needs to have measurable goals for student performance and benchmarks for meeting those goals.

Organizational Structure

TSD has recently reorganized its organizational structure. TSD will grow into this structure over the course of this strategic plan. Financial and Support Operations, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs, with the Executive Branch overseeing all.

- The Executive Branch is administered by the Superintendent and includes Legal, Human Resources, Educational Resource Center on Deafness (ERCOD), Information Technology, and Facilities Management.
- The Financial and Support Operations is managed by the Director of Finance and Operations and includes Accounting, Budget, Food Services, Purchasing, Risk Management, Housekeeping, Grounds, and Transportation.
- The Academic Affairs Division is administered by the Director of Academic Affairs and includes responsibility for all academic school programs including Student Support Services, Related Services and Curriculum and Assessment.
- The Director of Student Affairs is responsible for student programs after school and includes responsibility for the residential program, the Student Development Programs, Health Center, Interpreting Services and Athletics.



Current Workforce Profile

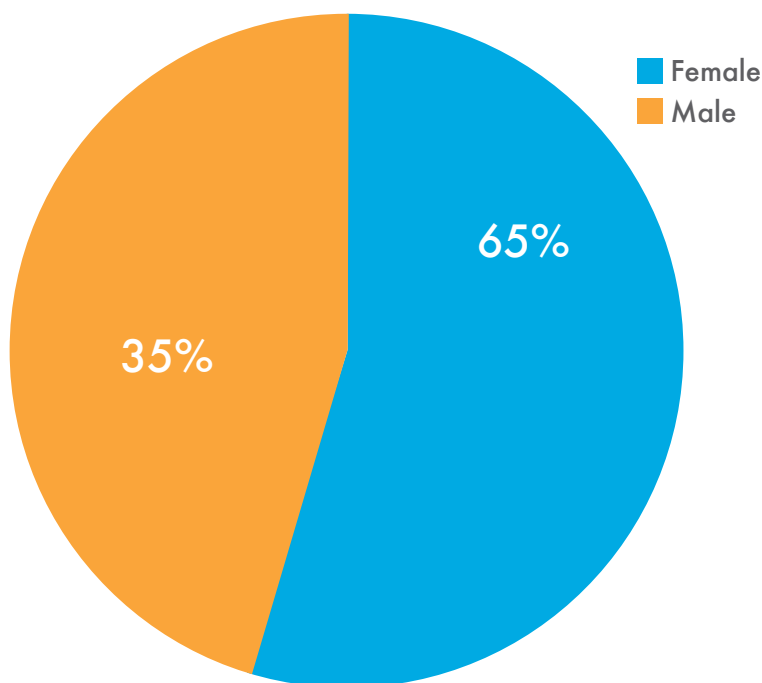
TSD's talented workforce of teachers, staff, and administrators is one of its greatest resources. Every year, however, it becomes more difficult to nourish, retain, and replace this resource. As a state agency that functions similarly to an independent school district, we are constantly asked to do more with less. Paperwork overloads, compliance issues, and poor salaries challenge enthusiasm and commitment. The salaries of classified staff are non-competitive and the demands of their jobs far exceed their compensation. TSD's professional faculty members, while paid on the same scale as Austin Independent School District teachers, are still experiencing high burnout.

Demographics: Gender, Ethnicity, Age, and Tenure

Approximately 48%¹ of TSD's workforce is deaf or hard of hearing. There is a higher percentage of deaf or hard of hearing staff in departments that provide direct care to TSD's students. Support functions generally have a lower percentage of deaf or hard of hearing staff. The workforce data presented does not include substitute employee information.

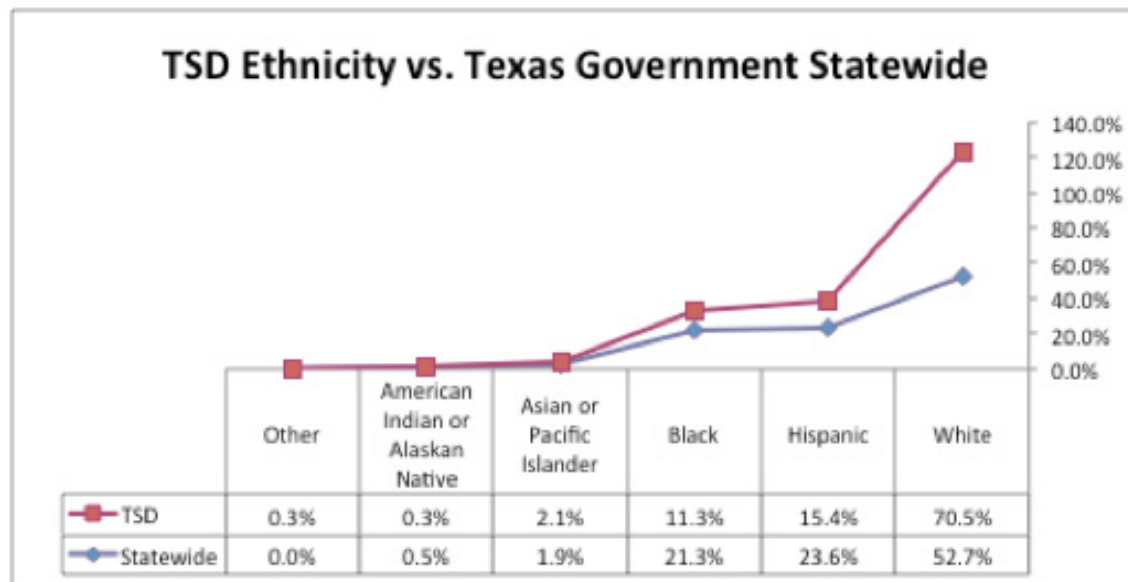
Approximately 65% of TSD's workforce is female and 35% is male. This is a higher percentage of female employees compared to the overall Texas State Government workforce, in which 53% is female.

TSD Employees by Gender



The breakdown of employees by gender at TSD has remained relatively constant over the last five years.

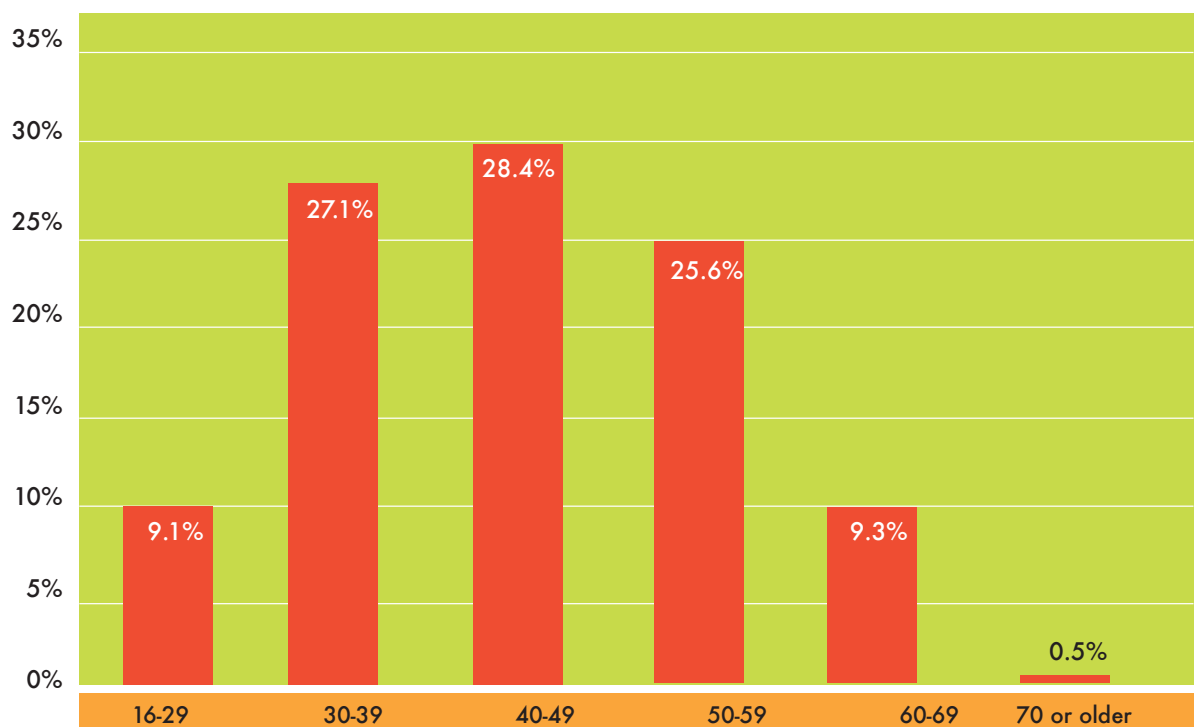
70% of TSD employees are White, 15% are Hispanic and 11% of employees are Black. In Texas State Government overall, 52% of employees are White, 24% are Hispanic, and 21% are Black. It is important that TSD identify means of recruiting and retaining minority employees.



¹ Source: Texas State Auditor's Office, E-Class System, Fiscal Year 2013

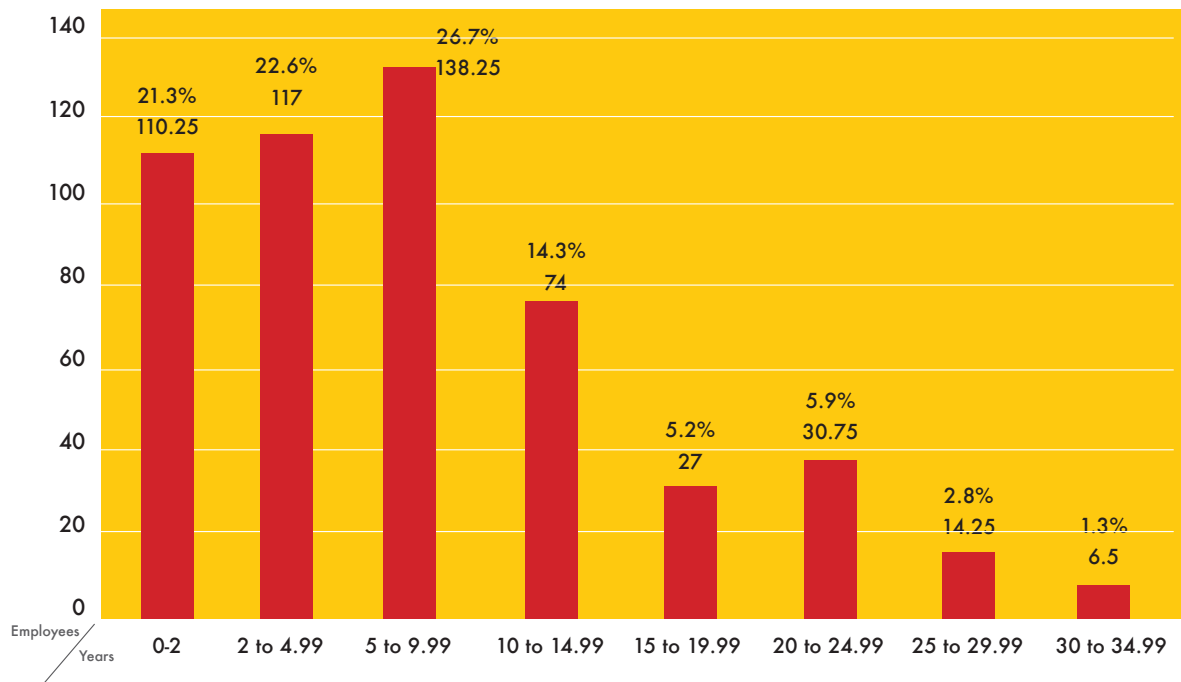
TSD employs staff of widely varying ages. The majority of TSD employees are in the forty to forty nine year range¹. The percentage of employees under thirty at TSD has gradually decreased over the past five years; whereas the percentage of employees over fifty has increased.

TSD Employees by Age



Approximately 44% of TSD's employees have fewer than five years of work experience with TSD. More than fifty employees have worked for TSD for at least twenty years¹. This breakdown of employee length of service is comparable to service time at other agencies in Texas State Government.

TSD Employees by Length of Service



Employee Turnover

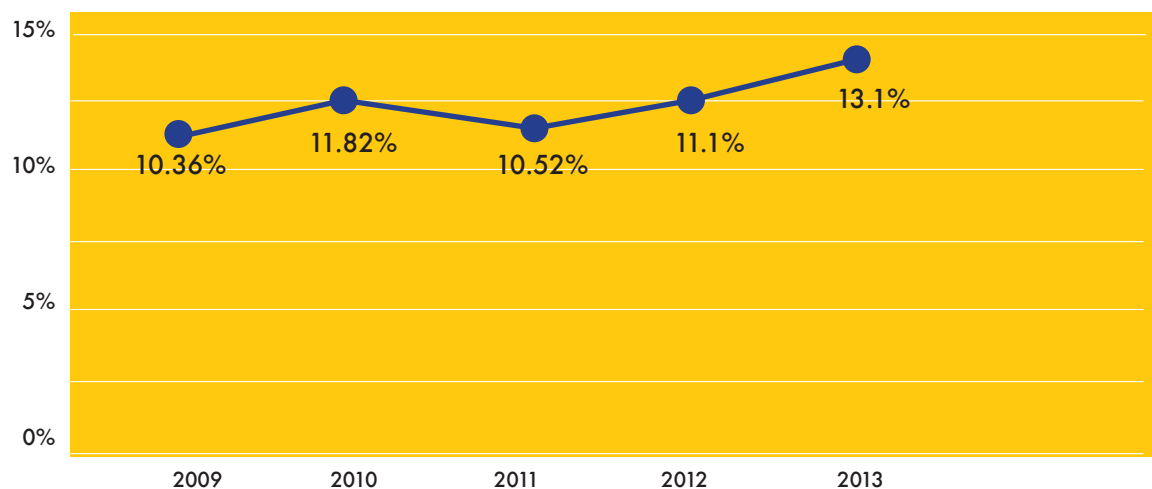
The Texas State Auditor's Office reports TSD's turnover rate as 15.9%¹ (including agency transfers), however, this percentage includes substitute employee turnover. When TSD removes substitute data, we calculate the turnover rate for 2013 as 13.1%². The turnover rate for the last three years indicates a trend shifting to higher turnover, but remains significantly lower than the statewide turnover of 18.9%¹.

¹ Source: Texas State Auditor's Office, E-Class System, Fiscal Year 2013

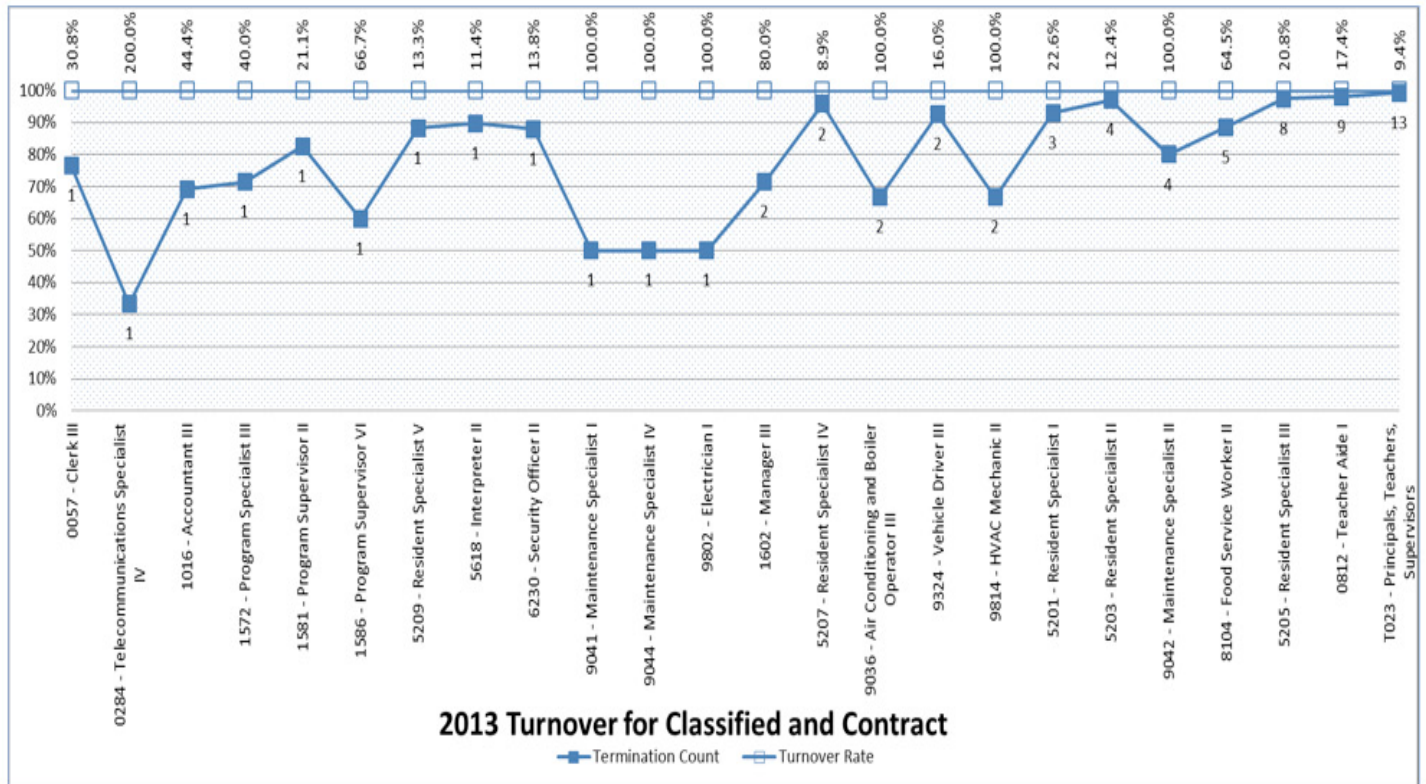
² Excludes substitute employee termination count, Includes agency transfers

The 2% increase in turnover rate may be attributed to a more positive outlook in the economy, and the low Austin unemployment rate. As the economy continues to improve, it is important that TSD has programs in place to retain employees.

Overall Turnover Rate (Excluding substitutes)



The 2013 turnover rate includes all employees other than substitutes. The turnover rate for classified and contract staff, excluding substitute employees is 14.5% and 9.4% , respectively. The chart below provides the position classification, count of terminations, and percent rate, for each position title where terminations occurred. Note, the Telecommunications Specialist percent rate is high due to the FTE allocation was listed as .5, and the termination was reported as 1 FTE.



Workforce Skills Critical to the Mission and Goals

TSD continually searches for individuals who are proficient in American Sign Language, are aware of issues related to deaf culture, and who possess quality education, experience, and qualifications particularly in the areas of education and child development.

¹ Source: Texas State Auditor's Office, E-Class System, Fiscal Year 2013

Technological skills for employees are also desirable as TSD continues to develop technology education programs, advance the technological base of the agency, and to explore the best uses of technology to support the deaf culture in Texas.

Other critical skills include sign language and interpretation skills, interpersonal skills, management skills, and skills in working collaboratively to resolve workplace problems and issues.

Additional Considerations

TSD has a growing customer base, both in the Austin area and throughout the state of Texas. As this population increases, the need for specialized skills and increased numbers of administrative, support, and outreach staff will be a growing workforce issue. The need to recruit, train and retain competent and qualified support staff may become a central issue for workforce planning, due to the special skills necessary to serve the deaf community throughout the state.

Future Workforce Profile

Expected Workforce Changes

Our workforce is dedicated to helping students learn and grow. For the past years, the school's service load for on campus and short-term student programs have increased. This current regular school year our on campus enrollment is at 550, and our total served including Summer Programs is 995. While TSD is fortunate to have this kind of viability when many schools for the deaf are struggling for their survival, our limited resources are causing us concern about providing an appropriate education for growing enrollment. We are experiencing an increase in referral of students with complex medical, behavioral and educational needs. The impact of this type of student on the budget is exponential and we find ourselves unable to provide the related and support services necessary for this type of student to access the general curriculum and receive a quality education. We are left with no options but to seek additional resources to serve these growing needs.

Future Workforce Skills Needed

TSD's dual mission is expected to remain stable for the foreseeable future. TSD provides comprehensive educational and residential services to school-age students throughout Texas at the School during the regular school year; and serves as a primary statewide resource center promoting excellence in education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing through research, training, and demonstration projects.

To achieve the goals supporting this mission, TSD will need teachers and other staff members with training, from universities, colleges, Educational Services Centers or other training sources in:

- Auditory Impairment
- Early childhood, handicapped
- Generic special education
- Seriously emotionally disturbed and autistic
- Severely and profoundly handicapped
- Math
- Science
- English as a Second Language
- Cochlear Implants
- Management of students with behavior problems and disorders
- Management with students with complex health needs
- Instructional and administrative technology

Additionally, TSD will need staff who have certification from the State Board of Educator Certification in the areas listed above.

In addition, all TSD teachers who teach core academic subjects to deaf and hard of hearing students must achieve the "highly qualified" standard under No Child Left Behind. This will require a comprehensive effort of additional professional development, new resources, and funds to support teachers in their academic coursework endeavors.

We will continue to need certified or licensed professionals in the related services areas, but with particular emphasis on psychological support and assessment personnel because of anticipated attrition through retirement in this area, and the need for more intensive services related to student behavioral disorders.

Another area of anticipated growth is for TSD data systems and records management. Demands for real-time information have increased. TSD lacks sufficient staff to support the clerical data entry as well as the training for staff on how to maintain them. The need for parent involvement has increased and the necessity for using solutions that are web based require higher levels of training. Additionally, managing multiple off-campus solutions requires stricter quality assurances for data integrity since often these systems are not relational.

TSD also anticipates changes in key administrative positions in the next five years. Schools for the deaf across the country are seeking qualified, experienced administrators for their programs and the available pool of candidates is dwindling at an alarming rate. Many of TSD's current principals and administrators, including the Superintendent have retired and been rehired and may consider leaving TSD entirely.

The complexity and time demands and the conditions of the work itself have caused many talented people to not enter the field of deaf education. For instance, stress, low pay, increased demands from unfunded mandates, higher student performance requirements, greater public expectations, board turnover, diminishing prestige, fear of poor superintendent/board relationships, and inadequate school funding are just a few of the issues that may be discouraging viable candidates from entering the field. We will continue to address these issues to develop leaders who are prepared to advance into TSD leadership positions.

Anticipated Changes in the Number of Employees Needed

TSD does not have adequate staff for the students we currently serve, and assuming that both the number and complexity of students TSD serves increases, as anticipated, TSD will become more insufficiently staffed. As enrollment rises, more staff will be needed, but that increase in staff will not necessarily be proportionate to current staffing needs. The students referred to TSD by their school districts have more complex, multiple disabling conditions that require greater numbers of staff members for effective and safe service to these students.

TSD also anticipates growth in outreach and resource services. TSD anticipates providing more outreach through technology innovations and expanding statewide videoconferencing consortium.

As distance learning requests increase, so will the need for dedicated faculty positions to support these requests. Videoconferencing is an effective, but a complex initiative. TSD already projects a need to expand the technology workforce to include experts on managing and maintaining videoconferencing services. Public school programs and regional day school for the deaf programs would like TSD to provide more diagnostic and assessment services for their students and families. We currently have only three educational diagnosticians to serve over 500 on-site students.

TSD is currently not adequately staffed to perform the second prong of its mission: serving as a primary statewide resource center promoting excellence in education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing through research, training, and demonstration projects. Statewide requests and needs far surpass the resources currently available to serve the state and additional employees are now needed to perform this part of the school's mission.

Additionally, TSD is currently experiencing shortages in the numbers of employees needed to maintain and manage the grounds of the 67-acre campus. In addition, with the 83rd legislative session transfer of our facilities management employees to the Texas Facilities Commission, we have been unable to maintain the level of service to the facility and students, as before the transfer, as the facilities employees performed numerous additional duties to help keep the school running.

Workforce Gap Analysis

Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Employees

We anticipate shortages of employees in the following areas:

- Teaching and related services
- Supervision, safety and instruction in the residential program of the School
- Statewide outreach services through the Educational Resource Center on Deafness

Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Skills

We anticipate a shortage of skills in the following areas:

- An insufficient supply of teachers certified to teach deaf students and who meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind, educational administrators, and related and support service professionals. This insufficient supply largely due to increased demand, retirement, attrition, and the closing of university training programs for teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing
- The lack of staff knowledge and skills in behavior management required working with students who are presenting increasingly challenging disabilities
- The lack of staff necessary to provide supervision, safety and instruction in the residential program of the School
- A gap between the technological skills necessary to support innovation and integrate technology into the curriculum and the current staff skill set

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